



Department of Homeland Security Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report for 20 December 2007

Current Nationwide



[For info click here](#)

- The Associated Press reports on a fire at the White House compound in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building. Within an hour, the blaze appeared to be under control. (See item [19](#))
- According to Reuters, a report released on Tuesday states that the United States remains unprepared for disasters ranging from biological attacks to a flu pandemic and funding for preparedness is falling, despite five years of constant and detailed warning. (See item [22](#))

DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report Fast Jump

Production Industries: [Energy; Chemical; Nuclear Reactors, Materials and Waste; Defense Industrial Base; Dams](#)

Service Industries: [Banking and Finance; Transportation; Postal and Shipping; Information Technology; Communications; Commercial Facilities](#)

Sustenance and Health: [Agriculture and Food; Water; Public Health and Healthcare](#)

Federal and State: [Government Facilities; Emergency Services; National Monuments and Icons](#)

Energy Sector

Current Electricity Sector Threat Alert Levels: Physical: ELEVATED, Cyber: ELEVATED

Scale: LOW, GUARDED, ELEVATED, HIGH, SEVERE [Source: ISAC for the Electricity Sector (ES-ISAC) – <http://www.esisac.com>]

1. *December 19, Bloomberg* – (Texas) **Houston Ship Channel closed to tanker traffic because of fog.** The Houston Ship Channel, which serves the largest U.S. petroleum port, was closed to tanker traffic and other vessels this morning because fog reduced visibility. Pilots shut down the waterway at 6:25 a.m. Houston time, delaying 15 inbound and 12 outbound vessels a spokesman for the U.S. Coast Guard said. The Vesseltrax.com Web site shows eight tankers either approaching the entrance to Galveston Bay or waiting in an anchorage southeast of it. Vessels must travel through Galveston Bay to get from the Gulf of Mexico to Houston-area ports. The 54-mile Houston Ship Channel typically has 55 vessel movements a day. It takes two to three days before a shutdown begins to affect operations at Houston-area refineries. More than

420 petrochemicals plants and two of the nation's four largest oil refineries are in the Houston area, according to the Greater Houston Partnership.

Source:

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601072&sid=ad26sWZ2LSSg&refer=energy>

2. *December 19, Associated Press* – (Ohio) **Truck crash kills one, ruptures gas pipeline.** A cargo container truck with a boom arm that stayed up after a delivery crashed into an overpass yesterday, killing the driver and rupturing a gas line that forced the evacuation of five homes. The crash happened about 50 miles southeast of Cleveland. The truck's hydraulic hoist arm hit the understructure of the bridge and gashed open a natural-gas line. The evacuation after the 4:30 a.m. crash lasted only a few hours until natural gas was shut off to the ruptured line.

Source: http://www.dispatch.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2007/12/19/z-apoh_bridge_1219.ART_ART_12-19-07_B9_6R8QOR5.html?sid=101

3. *December 19, Enquirer* – (Ohio) **Utility shutoffs banned?** Ohio utility regulators this morning will consider a request from the state's governor for a temporary winter ban on electric and gas shutoffs for nonpayment of bills. In a letter to the Public Utilities Commission chairman the governor of Ohio wrote a moratorium on shutoffs "would be the best and most appropriate way to ensure that no Ohio family is placed in harm's way during the cold winter months." A spokeswoman said late Tuesday the request was added to today's meeting of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, its last scheduled meeting for two weeks. The moratorium drew support from Ohio Consumers' Counsel and the Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy, an advocate for low-income customers before the commission. The governor said his decision was impacted by a November 28 fire in Toledo, Ohio, which claimed the lives of a mother and her three children who were using a candle to keep warm after Toledo Edison had shut off power to their home hours before.

Source:

<http://news.enquirer.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071219/BIZ01/712190371/1001/BIZ>

[\[Return to top\]](#)

Chemical Industry Sector

4. *December 19, CNN* – (Florida) **Explosion at Jacksonville, Florida, chemical plant.** Three workers are missing after an explosion Wednesday at a chemical plant sent a thick plume of smoke over a section of Jacksonville, according to the city's fire department spokesman. It was not immediately known whether anyone was injured or killed. The blast occurred at the T2 Lab on Faye Road in an industrial area on the waterfront in north Jacksonville. A woman who answered the lab's 24-hour facility emergency phone said the plant manufactures ecotane, a gasoline additive that reduces tailpipe emissions, according to the laboratory's Web site. Police cordoned off the area near Faye Road, closed off highway exits to the site and set about evacuating office workers from the city's industrial section, according to a *WTLV-TV* reporter. A spokesman for JEA, a

Jacksonville power company, said it has a power generating plant across the street and was evacuating all nonessential employees from the building.

Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/12/19/florida.explosion/index.html>

[\[Return to top\]](#)

Nuclear Reactors, Materials, and Waste Sector

5. *December 18, Nuclear Regulatory Commission* – (Indiana) **NRC proposes fine against Indiana DOT for failure to properly secure nuclear gauges.** The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed a \$3,250 fine against the Indiana Department of Transportation (DOT), for violations of NRC requirements associated with two incidents of failure to use proper methods to secure a gauge containing nuclear material. The first incident occurred on September 10, when a portable nuclear gauge belonging to the state agency was stolen from a temporary job site in Indianapolis, Indiana. The gauge was being used to measure the density of certain materials at a road construction site. The gauge operator had left the instrument unsupervised, on the ground, behind a pick-up truck for three to five minutes. During this time, the gauge was stolen. The gauge was recovered two hours later in a vacant lot. The gauge was not damaged during the incident and the source containing nuclear material remained in a shielded position. There was no threat of radiation exposure to the public. On September 18, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission conducted a special inspection to review the circumstances of the theft, its causes, and Indiana DOT's proposed corrective actions. During the inspection, NRC inspectors observed another instance of inadequate implementation of physical protection requirements for nuclear material, when a gauge was not properly secured in the back of a pick-up truck.

Source: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/news/2007/07-027.iii.html>

6. *December 18, Associated Press* – (National) **U.S. to make 'significant reduction' in number of nuclear weapons.** The president has approved "a significant reduction" in the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile, cutting it to less than one-quarter its size at the end of the Cold War, the White House said. "We are reducing our nuclear weapons stockpile to the lowest level consistent with America's national security and our commitments to friends and allies," the White House press secretary said. "A credible deterrent remains an essential part of U.S. national security, and nuclear forces remain key to meeting emerging security challenges." The government will not provide any numbers on the overall size of the nuclear stockpile, but there are believed to be nearly 6,000 warheads that are either deployed or in active reserve. Under terms of a 2002 arms control treaty with Russia, the U.S. is committed to reducing the number of deployed warheads to between 1,700 and 2,200 by 2012.

Source:

http://article.wn.com/view/2007/12/18/US_to_make_significant_reduction_in_number_of_nuclear_weapon/

[\[Return to top\]](#)

Defense Industrial Base Sector

7. *December 18, Associated Press* – (National) **iRobot gets \$286M Army robotics contract.** iRobot Corp. won a \$286 million contract to supply the U.S. Army with up to 3,000 of a new, smaller, and lighter version of iRobot's track-wheeled PackBot, a bomb-disarming robot, wresting the deal from a smaller rival that iRobot claimed stole its trade secrets. The contract also requires iRobot to provide spare parts, training, and repair services over five years.

Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/18/AR2007121800871.html>

[\[Return to top\]](#)

Banking and Finance Sector

8. *December 19, Associated Press* – (Pennsylvania) **Audit faults PennDOT license security, inspections.** Lax security led to the theft of materials used to produce Pennsylvania driver's licenses and identification cards, putting people at risk of fraud and identity theft, the state auditor general said Tuesday. Contractors hired since 2000 to produce licenses and ID cards for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation were not properly monitored and trained, an auditor said. As a result, hundreds of cards and laminate overlays were stolen or unaccounted for, he said. From 2003 to 2005, 1,500 blank cards and a roll of 100 holographic overlays were reported stolen, the auditor's report says. In addition, there was evidence that a sleeve of 500 blank cards may have fallen through the accounting cracks and there was no record of whether multiple shipments of voided cards had been destroyed. In December 2006, about a year after the audit period concluded, thieves broke into a driver's license center in Wilkes-Barre and stole enough equipment to make hundreds of fraudulent licenses. That prompted PennDOT to review the security at all 97 licensing centers and revise its procedures. A second report released on Tuesday concludes that PennDOT failed to verify the qualifications and experience of the people hired to inspect bridge and road construction. A PennDOT spokeswoman said there has been no evidence that the stolen or missing material has been used to make bogus licenses or identification.

Source: http://www.mcall.com/news/nationworld/state/all-all_penndot.6190624dec19,0,1745429.story

9. *December 18, Penn State Live* – (Pennsylvania) **Community advised of new phishing scam.** Individuals with Penn State e-mail addresses have received a phishing scam message purporting to be from Penn State Federal Credit Union. One example of the message has a subject line of "Unauthorized Activity!" and contains a link to a fake Web site that could personal identity security. These messages did not come from Penn State Federal Credit Union and should be deleted.

Source: <http://live.psu.edu/story/27868>

10. *December 18, WIBW 13 Topeka* – (Kansas) **BBB warns of scam.** The Better Business Bureau wants to let Kansans know about a scam they heard of recently. A local senior

citizen received a call that he had won \$150,000 in a sweepstakes. All he had to do to receive his winnings was to send a \$269.00 money gram using Wal-Mart for insurance that would protect him from paying taxes. The scam artist also said his name was Mary Smith and was working for the BBB in Florida. A legitimate company in Nevada was named as the sweepstakes company; however, they are a direct mail house. A second call offering the same claim to the Kansan was from the Dominican Republic. The BBB president warns Kansans to be careful in replying to all mail received during the holiday season.

Source: <http://www.wibw.com/home/headlines/12616771.html>

[\[Return to top\]](#)

Transportation Sector

11. *December 19, Associated Press* – (California) **Faulty oven causes scare on Hawaii-bound flight.** A faulty oven filled a jetliner cockpit with smoke Tuesday, forcing the Hawaii-bound plane to circle back and return safely to Los Angeles International Airport, officials said. The 244 passengers and eight crewmembers aboard the flight were not injured, an airline spokeswoman said. The plane was a half-hour into a flight to Honolulu when the pilot declared an emergency because of smoke in the cockpit, said a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration.

Source: http://www.usatoday.com/travel/flights/2007-12-19-hawaii-flight_N.htm

[\[Return to top\]](#)

Postal and Shipping Sector

12. *December 18, Chicago Sun-Times* – (Illinois) **Talcum powder sent to Daley, aldermen in letters.** Packages containing white powder and an angry letter were mailed this week to five Chicago politicians: the mayor of Chicago; the mayor's brother, who is also the chairman of the County Board's Finance Committee; the chairman of the City Council's Finance Committee; a City Council alderman; and the County Board president. In the case of the City Council alderman, once the package was opened, the police and fire departments were summoned, and later a hazardous materials team arrived and sealed off his ward office. The white powdery substance was later determined to be talcum powder.

Source: <http://www.suntimes.com/news/politics/702119.mail121807.article>

[\[Return to top\]](#)

Agriculture and Food Sector

13. *December 18, Associated Press* – (International) **Canada confirms case of mad cow disease.** Canada confirmed a new case of mad cow disease on Tuesday, the country's 11th case since the disease was first discovered there in 2003. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency said no part of the cow's carcass entered the human food or animal feed chains. The animal was identified as a 13-year-old cow from Alberta by the

national monitoring program, which targets cattle most at risk for the disease also known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy and has tested about 190,000 animals since 2003. The animal, from an unidentified farm, was born before the implementation of Canada's feed ban in 1997. Canada expects to detect a small number of cases over the next 10 years as the country progresses toward its goal of eliminating the disease from the national cattle herd. The U.S. federal government has recently relaxed import restrictions on Canadian meat and cattle.

Source:

<http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5h2dGllhWA9SzN1sH2R8h1vngI08AD8TK7S981>

[\[Return to top\]](#)

Water Sector

14. *December 18, Tampa Tribune*— (Florida) **Missing water's trail leads to county.** City officials in Port Richey, Florida, have been investigating how the city has been losing millions of gallons of water every month. They checked water meters and tested distribution lines across the city; they investigated local business owners thought to be using illegal hookups and reviewed utility department revenues and expenditures dating back several years. Although the investigation is far from over, Port Richey officials say they have figured out that most of the missing water is going into the county's water system. He intends to discuss the matter with county officials in the next week and plans to raise the issue of getting compensated for millions of dollars in lost revenue. The interim manager started investigating the water system after finding that the city was paying for more than it was pumping. He discovered that more than a quarter of the city's water supply was unaccounted for, a loss of between 5 million and 10 million gallons of drinking water every month for several years. Water purchases weigh heavily on the city's annual budget. More than 40 percent of its water comes from New Port Richey, which adds up to more than \$400,000 a year.

Source: <http://www2.tbo.com/content/2007/dec/18/pa-missing-waters-trail-leads-to-county/>

15. *December 17, KGTV 10 San Diego* – (California) **Boil water order issued for El Cajon nudist resort.** San Diego County health officials issued a boil water order Monday for a nudist resort in El Cajon after tests confirmed the presence of total coliform bacteria in the water. E. coli bacteria was not found in the drinking water supply at Sun Island Resort, according to the San Diego County Department of Environmental Health. Total coliform bacteria can come from soil or other sources in the environment and may indicate a problem with the water supply system, according to the DEH. The boil water order will remain in effect until the distribution system has been disinfected and additional tests confirm the absence of bacteria in the water supply, according to the DEH.

Source: <http://www.10news.com/news/14876892/detail.html>

[\[Return to top\]](#)

Public Health and Healthcare Sector

16. *December 19, All Headline News* – (National) **Tainted syringes cause of blood infections.** Health officials are currently investigating cases of blood infections suspected to have been caused by bacteria-contaminated syringes. Although infections have been recorded only in Texas and Illinois, syringes from the contaminated batch were sent off to Colorado, Florida, and Pennsylvania, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The infection was believed to be due to syringes used by the patients undergoing home treatment. The syringes were pre-filled with heparin, a substance that thins the blood. They were contaminated with the bacteria *Serratia marcescens*, which was found in a batch of the syringes produced and put out to the public by a company called Sierra Pre-Filled. Although no deaths have been recorded, the infection has caused illness to about 40 people in the two states.
Source: <http://www.allheadlinenews.com/articles/7009494886>
17. *December 19, Reuters* – (International) **Pakistan says no threat of bird flu pandemic.** Pakistan said on Wednesday there was no threat of a pandemic from bird flu, as World Health Organization experts visited the country's northwest, which reported the first human death from the virus. "There is no threat of epidemic or pandemic and there are no fresh cases being reported," a Pakistani Ministry of Health spokesman said. The last human case was reported on November 23.
Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/healthNews/idUSISL13704320071219>
18. *December 17, BBC News* – (International) **Canada reactor resumes operation.** The National Research Universal nuclear reactor in Chalk River, Ontario, resumed operations Sunday after being shut down for about a month. The reactor is a major global source of radioisotopes, and the shutdown led to a shortage of those medical isotopes, which are essential for medical imaging and diagnostic scans for cancer, heart conditions and fractures. The reactor is producing new supplies, which should be ready for distribution within a few days.
Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7147371.stm>

Government Facilities Sector

19. *December 19, Associated Press* – (District of Columbia) **Fire controlled at White House compound.** Thick black smoke billowed from a fire Wednesday on the White House compound in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building. The building houses the Office of Management and Budget and staff of the National Security Council and other agencies. The blaze appeared to be under control within an hour.
Source:
http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071219/ap_on_go_pr_wh/white_house_complex_fire;_ylt=AkEnCNogZSh7T622hFQLGwSs0NUE
20. *December 19, Santa Cruz Sentinel* – (California) **Investigators suspect bomb to blame**

in car explosion. Police believe someone broke a window and placed an incendiary device inside the city employee's car that blew up Monday in a downtown parking lot near City Hall in Watsonville, California. The blast shattered windows on the second floor of Watsonville/Aptos Adult School offices and classrooms across the parking lot, sending students scurrying for cover. Investigators were unable to confirm Tuesday what caused the unoccupied Chrysler 300 sedan to explode about 7:40 p.m. It is still unknown whether the incident was a random act or the employee's car was targeted. Source: <http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/story.php?storySection=Local&sid=51707>

21. *December 18, TWEAN 10 Syracuse* – (New York) **Arrest in anthrax scare in Cape Vincent.** An arrest was made after an anthrax scare earlier this month at the Cape Vincent Correctional Facility. State police say an inmate sent a letter containing a white powdery substance to a female employee at the prison. The letter read "This is Anthrax." The female the letter was sent to and three others were isolated for several hours until a hazardous materials unit determined the powder was not anthrax. The inmate is charged with placing a false bomb or hazardous substance in the first degree. Source: http://news10now.com/content/all_news/?ArID=130393&SecID=83

[\[Return to top\]](#)

Emergency Services Sector

22. *December 18, Reuters* – (National) **U.S. still unprepared for disaster: report.** The United States remains unprepared for disasters ranging from biological attacks to a flu pandemic and funding for preparedness is falling, according to a report released on Tuesday. Many states still lack a stockpile of drugs, masks, gloves, and other equipment needed to battle a pandemic, despite five years of constant and detailed warning, the Trust for America's Health said in its report. "Overall, federal funding for state and local preparedness will have declined by 25 percent in 3 years if the president's FY (fiscal year) 2008 request is approved," the report reads. "Until all states measure up, the United States is not safe." The nonprofit Trust has been issuing reports every year for five years, and said the 2001 anthrax attacks, in which five people died when anthrax spores were mailed to several offices, should have been a wake-up call. But the report released on Tuesday still finds preparedness spotty. "Thirteen states do not have adequate plans to distribute emergency vaccines, antidotes, and medical supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile," the report reads. "Twenty-one states do not have statutes that allow for adequate liability protection for healthcare volunteers during emergencies. Twelve states do not have a disease surveillance system compatible with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Electronic Disease Surveillance System," it added. "Seven states have not purchased any portion of their federally subsidized or unsubsidized antivirals to use during a pandemic flu. Seven states and (Washington) D.C. lack sufficient capabilities to test for biological threats." Source: http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20071218/us_nm/disaster_preparedness_usa_dc;_ylt=Akp5syl4gGQPslazEQxUKQIWIr0F

[\[Return to top\]](#)

Information Technology

23. *December 19, Computer Weekly* – (International) **Cisco releases first annual security report.** Cisco has released its first annual report on the global state of security. The report makes several recommendations to enable organizations to protect their networks. Cisco says that although many end-of-year industry reports focus on content security threats such as viruses, worms, Trojans, spam, and phishing, its 2007 Annual Security Report broadens the areas covered with a set of seven risk-management categories. These include vulnerability, physical, legal, trust, identity, human, and geopolitical factors. Together, they encompass security requirements that involve anti-malware protection, data-leakage protection, enterprise risk management, disaster planning, and other requirements. The report makes several recommendations to organizations to enable them to protect their systems: conduct regular audits within organizations of attractive targets and evaluate the avenues that can be used to attack them; understand the notion that threats follow application usage patterns; change the mindset of employees, consumers, and citizens who consider themselves innocent bystanders, and empower them to become active against security threats; make security education a priority; institutionalize IT security education by incorporating it into school curricula; consider more than just performance when building a secure network; security suppliers need to provide comprehensive security systems that extend throughout the network infrastructure.

Source: <http://www.computerweekly.com/Articles/2007/12/19/228671/cisco-releases-first-annual-security-report.htm>

24. *December 19, Computerworld* – (National) **Gmail open to Internet Explorer hijacks.** Hackers can exploit an unpatched flaw in Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser to access Gmail accounts, according to security firm Cenzic. Cenzic has warned Internet Explorer users that the browser contains an unspecified cached files bug that, when combined with a cross-site request forgery flaw in Gmail, exposes the webmail account sign-ons and lets others access those accounts and any messages or file attachments there. Although not a bug that can be exploited remotely -- an attacker must have local, physical access to the PC -- as Cenzic pointed out, there are scenarios where that is not a limitation. "These vulnerabilities could be exploited such that all users of a shared computer, who use Internet Explorer and share a user account -- a common practice at computer kiosks in a library or internet cafe -- could be vulnerable," said Cenzic. Gmail contributes to the overall vulnerability because its URLs display attachments when viewed using the 'View Source' command, the warning added. Internet Explorer, however, sports "improper use of caching directives [and] incorrect access checks on cached Internet Explorer files." Together, the bugs could conceivably let someone at a public PC hijack any Gmail log-on credentials that had been entered on the machine since the Internet Explorer cache had last been purged. Internet Explorer deletes the contents of its cache only as new files are added -- and the oldest are deleted -- or when the user explicitly instructs the browser to clear the cache using the 'Delete Browsing History' command. However, Microsoft denied that Internet Explorer even has a bug. "Microsoft has thoroughly investigated the claim and found that this is not a product vulnerability," said a company spokesman.

Source: <http://www.pcadvisor.co.uk/news/index.cfm?newsid=11642>

25. *December 19, Computer Weekly* – (International) **Microsoft says lottery scams are the fastest growing area of cybercrime.** Microsoft commissioned a survey of 3,600 internet users across Germany, Italy, Denmark, the UK, and the Netherlands, and found that 50 percent of spam e-mails sent are lottery scams. In the UK, 20 percent of those who received lottery spam opened some messages, with 10 percent having replied to them. In addition, 13 percent have clicked on potentially malicious links inside these e-mails. The survey found that 3 percent of UK respondents had lost money through such lottery scams over the past 12 months, which is the same as the pan-European average. Microsoft UK's chief security advisor said, "Internet lottery scams are one of the fastest growing areas of cybercrime. The scams are of increasing concern to international law enforcement, offering criminals a low-risk opportunity to steal money from internet users."

Source: <http://www.computerweekly.com/Articles/2007/12/19/228673/lottery-scams-are-fastest-growing-cybercrime.htm>

26. *December 18, CMP Channel* – (National) **VoIP threats, vulnerabilities abound.** Whether their purpose is malicious, for financial gain, or just to prove it can be done, VoIP systems are a nut that hackers and exploiters can not wait to crack. As VoIP continues to proliferate into 2008, those threats will only get stronger and more sophisticated, according to a vulnerability research lead for Sipera VIPER Lab, a research team bent on identifying ways VoIP can be exploited. He said word of some VoIP threats started to spread in 2006, with toll fraud and vishing -- a VoIP version of phishing -- taking center stage. By 2007, those threats and vulnerabilities began to manifest further. In the coming year, by many accounts, exploits used to bring down VoIP systems and scam their users will continue to expand, with many exploits being used in conjunction with another to form an attack powerhouse of sorts. The biggest VoIP threats and vulnerabilities of 2007 -- remote eavesdropping, VoIP hopping, vishing, VoIP spam, toll fraud, and the Skype worm -- will again make headlines in 2008, the researcher said. The president and CEO of Warwick, Rhode Island-based solution provider Atrion Networking, said VoIP threats have evolved and grown from a "what if?" scenario into a full-blown "what now?" situation. "There will be more and more threats. It's definitely going to grow," he said. Security providers are stressing IT managers and others use VoIP encryption to ward off current and future threats as the use of IP grows.

Source: <http://www.crn.com/networking/204805527>

Internet Alert Dashboard

To report cyber infrastructure incidents or to request information, please contact US-CERT at soc@us-cert.gov or visit their Website: www.us-cert.gov.

Information on IT information sharing and analysis can be found at the IT ISAC (Information Sharing and Analysis Center) Website: <https://www.it-isac.org/>.

[\[Return to top\]](#)

Communications Sector

27. *December 18, Government Executive* – (National) **Land-based backup to GPS wins reprieve in spending bill.** A terrestrial backup for the satellite-based Global Positioning System endorsed by a wide range of users from the aviation, marine transportation, and telecommunications industries gained a new lease on life in the fiscal 2008 omnibus spending bill passed by the House Monday. The Coast Guard had planned to terminate operation of its LORAN (for Long-Range Navigation) system, which could serve as the backbone of a GPS backup, in fiscal 2008. But language in the Homeland Security Department portion of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008 denied that request. The omnibus bill said that termination would be premature, partly due to the fact that an improved version of LORAN, known as enhanced Loran or eLORAN, has been recommended as a GPS backup by the multiagency National Space Based Positioning, Navigation, and Timing Committee, whose membership includes top officials from the Defense, Homeland Security, Transportation, Commerce, and State departments, along with NASA. That committee has not publicly released its eLORAN recommendation. The Transportation Department's Volpe National Transportation Systems Center urged development of an alternative to GPS in a 2001 report that concluded the satellite-based system could be knocked out by jamming its high-frequency low-power signals. The report suggested LORAN as a possible backup. Since the Volpe report was issued, the Coast Guard -- at the direction of Congress -- has converted most of its LORAN stations, which had a location accuracy of from one quarter of a nautical mile to one nautical mile, to eLORAN stations, which have an accuracy of between eight and 65 feet. GPS also provides precise timing signals for telecommunications companies worldwide, and they urged the Transportation and DHS to adopt eLORAN as a backup during a public comment period earlier this year.

Source: <http://govexec.com/dailyfed/1207/121807bb1.htm>

28. *December 18, PC Pro* – (International) **Virgin customers suffer network collapse.** Virgin Media experienced a national collapse of its broadband network Monday night as a result of a glitch in its automated router maintenance service. The glitch caused Virgin Media's servers to lose their DHCP leases, leading to the servers attempting to renew nearly three million IP addresses all at once, bringing the system to a halt. Virgin says the problem is now resolved and full service is restored. A spokesperson for the company says the length of the outage varied greatly between users, with some "getting their connections back in a few seconds, while others would have taken much longer." "At 9:20 p.m. last night, customers in a number of regions temporarily lost connectivity to their broadband and Video on Demand services," a statement from the company read. "This occurred as a result of an error during a routine maintenance process which affected some customers' modems and set top boxes."

Source: <http://www.pcpro.co.uk/news/148968/virgin-customers-suffer-network-collapse.html>

[\[Return to top\]](#)

Commercial Facilities Sector

29. *December 18, Stillwater Gazette* – (Minnesota) **Coal fire causes explosion at Allen S. King plant.** A fire spread through the coal-handling system at Xcel Energy's Allen S. King plant shortly after 6 p.m. Tuesday night, causing an explosion strong enough to blow through a corrugated steel wall. The fire chief of Bayport, Minnesota, said the explosion occurred after plant workers noticed abnormally high carbon monoxide levels in part of the coal-handling system and went to investigate. They opened a door in the seventh-floor coal-storage bunker and put out a small fire there. At some point, a sprinkler system went off, the force of which likely kicked coal dust into the air that ignited and caused the explosion. As of 10:30 p.m., fire officials and Xcel Energy representatives said the exact cause of the fire was still unclear. No one was injured in the incident.

Source:

http://www.stillwatergazette.com/articles/2007/12/18/breaking_news/breakingnews01.txt

[\[Return to top\]](#)

National Monuments & Icons Sector

30. *December 19, Star-Telegram* – (Texas) **Texas senators pushing to allow guns in national parks.** Texas' two senators have signed on to a national effort to let visitors to national parks to carry loaded guns. The rules need to change, some say, because restrictions often vary between federal and state land, and travelers might not know whether it is legal for them to carry their guns onto the property. "These inconsistencies in firearms regulations for public lands are confusing, burdensome and unnecessary," a congressman wrote in a letter to the Interior Department. In Texas, the issue of guns in parks has merged into a growing controversy over the Christmas Mountains, a 9,269-acre desert range next to Big Bend National Park. The Land commissioner has pushed to sell the property. He has also resisted transferring the property to the National Park Service if the federal agency insists on enforcing its regular firearms restrictions. In the face of public outcry, the Christmas Mountain sale was put on hold until February so the National Park Service can make an offer. Meanwhile, Interior Department officials say they have received a letter signed by 47 senators and will review it. Texas congressional leaders say they are behind the effort.

Source: http://www.star-telegram.com/state_news/story/368104.html

[\[Return to top\]](#)

Dams Sector

31. *December 19, Santa Maria Times* – (California) **Storm brings more rain to SM than expected.** On December 18, Santa Maria, California, had the most rain to fall in the area on any day in more than a year and a half and more rain is expected this week. The National Weather Service had posted a flash flood watch for the Zaca Fire burn area in Los Padres National Forest, and an urban and small-stream flood advisory was also

posted for Santa Maria by the Weather Service through Tuesday evening. Local officials said they are monitoring rainfall amounts upstream from the Santa Maria River Levee, which has caused concern because of its deteriorated state. Officials say they will be watching the levee more closely once there is water in the river, which is now dry.

Source:

<http://www.santamariatimes.com/articles/2007/12/19/news/featurednews/news01.txt>

[\[Return to top\]](#)

*** With December 24 being announced as a Federal Holiday there will not be a DHS Daily Report disseminated on Monday December 24. The weekend report will be disseminated on December 26.**

DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report Contact Information

DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Reports – The DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report is a daily [Monday through Friday] summary of open-source published information concerning significant critical infrastructure issues. The DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report is archived for ten days on the Department of Homeland Security Website: <http://www.dhs.gov/iaipdailyreport>

DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report Contact Information

Content and Suggestions:	Send mail to NICCRports@dhs.gov or contact the DHS Daily Report Team at (202) 312-5389
Subscription and Distribution Information:	Send mail to NICCRports@dhs.gov or contact the DHS Daily Report Team at (202) 312-5389 for more information.

Contact DHS

To report physical infrastructure incidents or to request information, please contact the National Infrastructure Coordinating Center at nicc@dhs.gov or (202) 282-9201.

To report cyber infrastructure incidents or to request information, please contact US-CERT at soc@us-cert.gov or visit their Web page at www.us-cert.gov.

Department of Homeland Security Disclaimer

The DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report is a non-commercial publication intended to educate and inform personnel engaged in infrastructure protection. Further reproduction or redistribution is subject to original copyright restrictions. DHS provides no warranty of ownership of the copyright, or accuracy with respect to the original source material.